"As Of Yet Untitled" by Michal Smith
3rd Place, Short Play 13-15
Scene 1

The first scene opens with Peanut sitting amongst the audience, Prentiss sitting in an armchair at stage center pointed toward downstage-center-right, and Theo sitting in a wooden chair reading a newspaper at upstage left pointed in the same direction as the armchair.

Prentiss: (Getting up suddenly, and using dramatic gesticulations) Oh, what a tale of woe! Oh, what suffer! (Theo looks up from his newspaper) What a story, and yet not worth telling, worth knowing, but never the utterance upon thy lips, (Theo folds over the newspaper and sets it down on the floor next to him) and will guide ignorance! Oh, what fool will the words ne’er guide his soul, (Theo starts giggling) and what pity that shall... (stops suddenly and glances over his shoulder at Theo)

Theo: (In a poor attempt to stop laughing) Hah! We get it, we get it, Prentiss!

Shakespeare was a genius, but you don’t need to imitate him. Be creative! Make it your own! (Frowns thoughtfully for a second, then continues) Besides, I thought you said it was a comedy, not a tragedy!

Prentiss: (Gestures passionately) It IS a comedy, Theo. (Crosses his arms)

Theo: (Laughs, gets up, approaches the armchair from stage left, and rests his arms on the back of the armchair) What kind of way is that to start a comedy? (Peanut proceeds to stand abruptly and walk toward the exit of the theatre. Theo points at Peanut as he leaves) See? People are leaving already and we’re not even, (glances
down at his watchless wrist for a split second, then look up again) forty-five
seconds in!

Prentiss: (Throwing up his arms in frustration) Then how would you suggest starting,

Theo?

Theo: (gesturing at himself) Do I look even remotely look like a playwright? (Irritatedly)

Have that other idiot Mr. Stuart hired to write that bit. It's about time he did
something 'round here.

Prentiss: You mean Mr. Hu?

Theo: Mr. What?

Prentiss: No, no, no. Mr. Watt is the prop designer. Mr. Hu is the other writer.

Theo: (Holding his hands up) Hold up! Who is the other writer?

Prentiss: (Nods greatful) Yes, exactly!

Theo: Who, as in you don't know, or who as in Mr. W-H-O?

Prentiss: H-U actually. Ida Know-Hu is his wife, the stage manager. (Laughs) You

shoulda seen how the producer reacted! (Imitates a snarl)

Theo: (Also laughing and facepalming himself) My goodness, it's Abbott and Costello all

over again! (Around this time, Peanut subtly enters back again into the audience)

Prentiss: (Lightly sarcastic) Tell me about it! But, hey, it could be worse! Mr. Why

could've been the lead role!

Theo: (Purses lips innocently.) Except he's terrible at acting, so he's my boss instead. I

have to ask Why every time I take a job.
Prentiss: (Laughs briefly, then says:) Speaking of which, I’d better get the script to Mr. Stuart.

Theo: Alright. (Pats Prentiss on the shoulder) I’ll leave ya to it. (Collects his newspaper, then exits stage left) (After a few moments, Prentiss himself exits stage right)

**Scene 2**

The second scene opens with Mr. Stuart, who appears to be focused on some paperwork, sitting at his cluttered desk at center stage. Peanut is still sitting in the audience. Both Charline and Prentiss are on standby to enter from stage right.

Prentiss: (Entering from stage right with a stack of papers in his hands) ‘morning, Mr. Stuart. I got most of the script done.

Mr. Stuart: Hmm? (Looks up) Oh! Good morning, Mr. Prentiss. I suppose Mr, uh...

Prentiss: Mr. Hu.

Mr. Stuart: (Confused) Mr. what?

Prentiss: (Shakes head) No! Mr. Watt is in charge of prop design, remember? Mr. Hu is the other writer.

Mr. Stuart: (Appears to remember) Ah yes! The one the producer didn’t like. He could do what you haven’t finished.

Peanut: I didn’t like him either!
Mr. Stuart: (Glares at Peanut, cups his hands, and yells) There's a reason we have several producers! (After a few seconds, Prentiss clears his throat loudly) Oh yes! Give those here. (Prentiss hands Mr. Stuart the stack of papers, which he proceeds to read the top one) Oh dear. (Shakes head) Tsk, tsk tsk! The only role Charline could take is the (Emphasis on the quotes)“Ugly Sister”. She is (emphasis) NOT going to be happy about that. Not happy at all.

Charline: (Storming in from stage right, and, of course, yelling angrily) What's this I hear about being the Ugly Sister?!?  

Prentiss: (Staring at her, and talking a bit quickly) Wow. Word gets around fast. (Starts speedwalking to exit stage left)

Mr. Stuart: (Grabbing Prentiss by the back of his shirt collar) Oh no, you don’t!  

(Redirecting him toward Charline) You’re going to explain to this (disgusted and sarcastic) lovely lady (pushing Prentiss toward Charline) why she has to play the role of the ugly sister.

Peanut: Her lack of charm might have something to do with it!

Charline: (Glaring at Peanut) Why! You little....! Just wait until my lawyer gets here! I’m suing all of you!

Mr. Stuart: (Panicking) Don’t sue me! I think you’re (disgusted, and retches) lovely.

Peanut: She really isn’t!

Mr. Stuart: (Glaring at Peanut and shouting) And QUIET IN THE PEANUT GALLERY!

Charline: (Huffs) I'm still getting my lawyer! (Angrily exits stage right)

Mr. Stuart sighs, and after a few seconds, both Mr. Stuart and Prentiss exit stage left.
Scene 3

Scene three opens with Prentiss and Mr. Stuart standing next to each other directly behind a chair at center stage. There's a coffee table at downstage centerright and a backdrop of a fireplace. Peanut is sitting in the audience, and both Charline and Theo are on standby to enter from stage left. Mr. Stuart carries a copy of a script.

Mr. Stuart: (Looking at his watch) She's late.

Prentiss: (nods) She probably did go hire a lawyer. (Charline enters from stage left.)

(With faux astonishment) Speak of the devil! (Theo enters from stage left with a briefcase in his hands.)

Theo: (Professionally) While my client has conceded that there was nothing unreasonable about your request, Mr. Stuart, she also requests that I sit in and make sure everything else is reasonable as well.

Mr. Stuart: (Reluctantly) Fair enough.

Prentiss: (Incredulously) I didn’t know you were a lawyer, Theo!

Theo: Well... (Gesturing to his suit) I am.

Mr. Stuart: (Clearing his throat, all of them turn to look at him) Alright. (Claps hands) I said “fair enough.”. Let’s get to work. (Hands Charline a script)

Charline: (Takes the script and examines it with horror) This is outrageous!

Mr. Stuart: (Cringing incredulously) What part of this is... “outrageous”? 
Charline: (Still horrified) All of it! (Throws the script at Mr. Stuart)

Theo: Let me see that. (Walks over, picks up the script, and examines it) Ah! I see what the issue is. You have her breaking the fourth wall. (Clicks tongue and looks up at Prentiss and Mr. Stuart) We can’t have that.

Prentiss: (Frowning) What on Earth’s wrong with that?

Theo: She can’t do it.

Charline: (Protesting) I can do it! (Turns profile left, and waves) Hello, fans, who all love me! (Turns back toward Prentiss and Mr. Stuart) See?

Theo: (Turning toward frontstage, using a presenting gesture) As demonstrated.

(Iinnocent shrug) And it says so in her contract.

Prentiss: (Confused) Contract?

Theo: (Passes script back to Charline, pulls the contract out of his briefcase, and hands it to Prentiss) Section 1.b

Prentiss: (Takes the file, and starts reading it aloud) “The signed below will be paid, upon the date of performance, a value of money equal to, but not exceeding, $10 per hour of rehearsal and performance time…” Hold on! (Laughs and turns to Mr. Staurt) You got Charline to work for a little over minimum wage?

Charline: (Confused and angry) What?

Theo: Keep reading.

Prentiss: “...under the circumstances that they not be required to break the fourth wall, spend time practicing outside of rehearsal, or be present more than 5 hours a day, and must be provided with a vanilla frozen custard shake on an hourly basis,
provided with additional takeout exceeding a value of $12 on a daily basis,
provided with free tickets exceeding value of $50 per day of rehearsal, and"... oh
geez... "... provided with 35 pounds of cheesecake for every 10 minutes."

Peanut: Wow, it's no wonder that she's so fat!
Prentiss, Mr. Stuart, Theo, and Charline: (Shouting) Shut up!
Peanut: By the way, you only have 6 minutes left!
Prentiss: Really? Already?
Mr. Stuart: (shouts angrily) THEN WE OUGHT TO GET TO IT! (Calmer) Alright. We
can work around that. What else is an issue?
Charline: (Still angry) You make me sound so stupid!
Peanut: That doesn't take a lot of effort!
Charline: (Ignoring Peanut, and speaking with a very girly tone) "Oh! Tomatoes are my
(emphasis) FAVORITE fruit!" (Normal angry tone) Everybody knows that
tomatoes are vegetables!
Prentiss: (Cringing at her statement) Actually... tomatoes are a type of fruit.
Charline: (Outraged) They are not! They are as vegetable as a vegetable could be!
(Turning questioningly toward Theo) Aren't they?
Theo: (Shaking his head) Tomatoes are a type of fruit.
Charline: (Skeptical) Alright then. (Angrily) What about this one? (girly tone) "The Sun
is my favorite star!" The Sun is, most definitely, not a star! It's a sun!
Mr. Stuart: (Frustrated) The Sun is a star.
Charline: It is ....
Theo: (Interrupting) It's a star.

Charline: (Calming down) Oh.

Mr. Stuart: (Clearing his throat. Everyone turns to look at him) If that's settled, then maybe we can (emphasis) GET ON WITH REHEARSAL?

Peanut: Right! We do wanna actually see a show!

Mr. Stuart: (Ignoring Peanut) Let's start with Act 1, Scene 7. (Prentiss nods, and they both jump off the front of the stage. Theo moves to stand idly at Backstage Right, while Charline changes pages and stands at Front Centerstage)

Charline: (Reading off the page, using dramatic gestures, but talking monotone) Oh this wretched sister of mine! She hath steals my dude (Not pausing and not following the stage directions she's about to read) walk to Frontstage Right, gesture dramatically, and speak loudly. Not only has the shrewish sister stolen my dude, she hath stolen all my books on Hippocrates and his medicine (without pausing) gesture toward stage right and act angry. This little shrew has...!

Peanut: (Throwing a newspaper at the stage) She sucks at this! What kind of idiot doesn't know how to say Hippocrates? (Standing up) And really? (Looks skeptical) Prentiss wrote this garbage?

Prentiss: (Jumping back up on stage at frontstage right) No, sir, my (emphasis) garbage, after scene 1, doesn't come until Act 3. This is the portion that Mr. Hu wrote.

Peanut: Mr. what?

Theo: (Walking with his arms crossed to left centerstage) No, Mr. Watt is in charge of props, you see?
Peanut: (Understandingly) Ahhhh! Okay. I get it now!

Mr. Stuart: (Reentering from stage left, and sounding irate) Then can we please proceed?

Charline: No! Apparently (Emphasis and points toward Peanut) HE thinks he can do it better!

Peanut: Yes, actually. I believe I could! (Jumps up on stage to be at front centerstage)

Mr. Stuart: (Pointing toward wherever Peanut was seated and speaking with aggression)

Sir, please go back to your seat!

Peanut: (Annoyed) I would, but your main actress is trash!

Mr. Stuart: (Reasonably) I know, but...

Charline: (Interrupting) WHAT?

Mr. Stuart: (Instantly regretting his choice of words and backing up to hide behind Prentiss) On second thought, let’s see what you can do.

Peanut: (Takes script from Charline, who’s very angry, and returns to Front Centerstage) Let’s see... (Flips through the pages, and points at a spot on one page) How about this one? (Clears his throat, then reads with dramatic gestures, a very dramatic tone, remaining in meter, and making good eye contact) Oh, what a tale of woe! Oh, what suff’ring! What a story, and yet not worth telling, worth knowing, but never the utterance upon thy lips, and will guide ignorance! Oh, what fool will the words ne’er guide his soul, and what pity that shall provide the role that will feed hungry mouths but ne’er the minds, a good tale, perhaps even fun in time, but this? This is, evidently, not that Shakespeare story. This is a tale
of two sisters and their love, with dreadful irony, I should think. It all began with Charles of London, in this little town of France. (Nods approvingly and hands the script back to Charline, and looks at Prentiss) This is pretty good.

Prentiss: (Nudges Theo) I told you it was a good introduction!

Theo: Yeah, I never should've doubted you.

Mr. Stuart: (shrugs) It’s not too bad, but... (Suddenly, a bell interrupts)

Charline: Lunch Break! (Runs and exits stage left)

Mr. Stuart: Wait!

Theo: (Clicks his tongue) Tsk, tsk, tsk. You signed the contract! (Walks, and exits stage left)

Mr. Stuart: (Yelling after them) We didn’t actually rehearse anything!

Prentiss: (Walking toward stage left) I could go for some pizza.

Mr. Stuart: Prentiss! Wait! What do I tell the producers? What are we going to call the play?

Prentiss: (Without stopping walking) Tell the producers that the play is... As of Yet Untitled, and might be a bit delayed.

Mr. Stuart: B-b-but! (Prentiss exits the stage, Mr. Stuart sighs, and reaches behind the chair to reveal a metal lunchbox, which he opens, pulls a sandwich out of, and starts eating it.) We were so close to being productive!